

Kaslow, George W., Jr.

Strategic Decisions for United Methodism
in High Point, N.C.

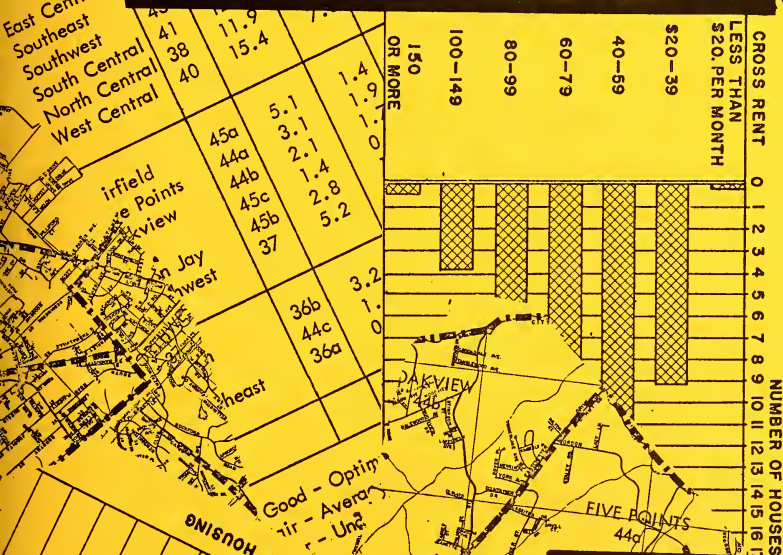
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for
UNITED METHODISM
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HIGH POINT, N.C.



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BY

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National Division of the Board of Missions
of The United Methodist Church
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INTRODUCTION

This study of the United Methodist Church in High Point, North Carolina, was undertaken at the request of the former District Superintendent, Dr. Philip N. Shore. The request was generated by recognition of changing demographic patterns in High Point and its environs and the subsequent problems affecting the 16 United Methodist Churches in the area.

This phenomenon, a common one in the United States today, places great demands on the wisdom and flexibility of people who must make decisions regarding ways in which the church can adapt to needs of a changing population without destroying the vitality and commitment of the people who remain in the old communities. The choices are never easy and they are never perfect. But they may be made a great deal easier by a consideration of as much factual information as is available. This study tries to present such information.

Further, tentative recommendations regarding the future of the individual churches are made in light of the facts produced in the survey and in consideration of other churches in similar circumstances which are known to the Department of Research and Survey.



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CHAPTER 1

TRENDS IN HIGH POINT

High Point is one of three cities -- the other two being Greensboro and Winston-Salem -- which constitute a geographical area called "The Golden Triad." Although this area has a distinct set of regional characteristics, there are others peculiar to each of the three cities. Also, the cities are far enough apart and sufficiently different from one another to have a distinct life and identity of their own. High Point is the smallest of the three, both in terms of geographical area and in population. Primarily an industrial city whose most important manufactured products have long been furniture and hosiery, High Point plans to broaden its economic base by greater diversification of its manufactured products.

In the city of High Point there are 16 United Methodist Churches. Fourteen of these serve a predominately white constituency and two (formerly churches of the North Carolina-Virginia Annual Conference) are predominately Negro. Methodist Churches are located in all parts of the city so that virtually no resident of High Point is very far from a Methodist Church.

Any local church is greatly influenced by what happens within its community. There are several trends which have already been observed or which may occur in High Point that should be considered by church leaders as they plan strategy for their local churches and for the denomination in the years which lie immediately ahead.

Population Growth and Redistribution

For nearly seventy years High Point has had a steadily increasing population. Table 1 shows the population for each of the census years since 1900.

Figure 1.-- LOCATION AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP SIZE OF
UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES: 1968
High Point, N. C.

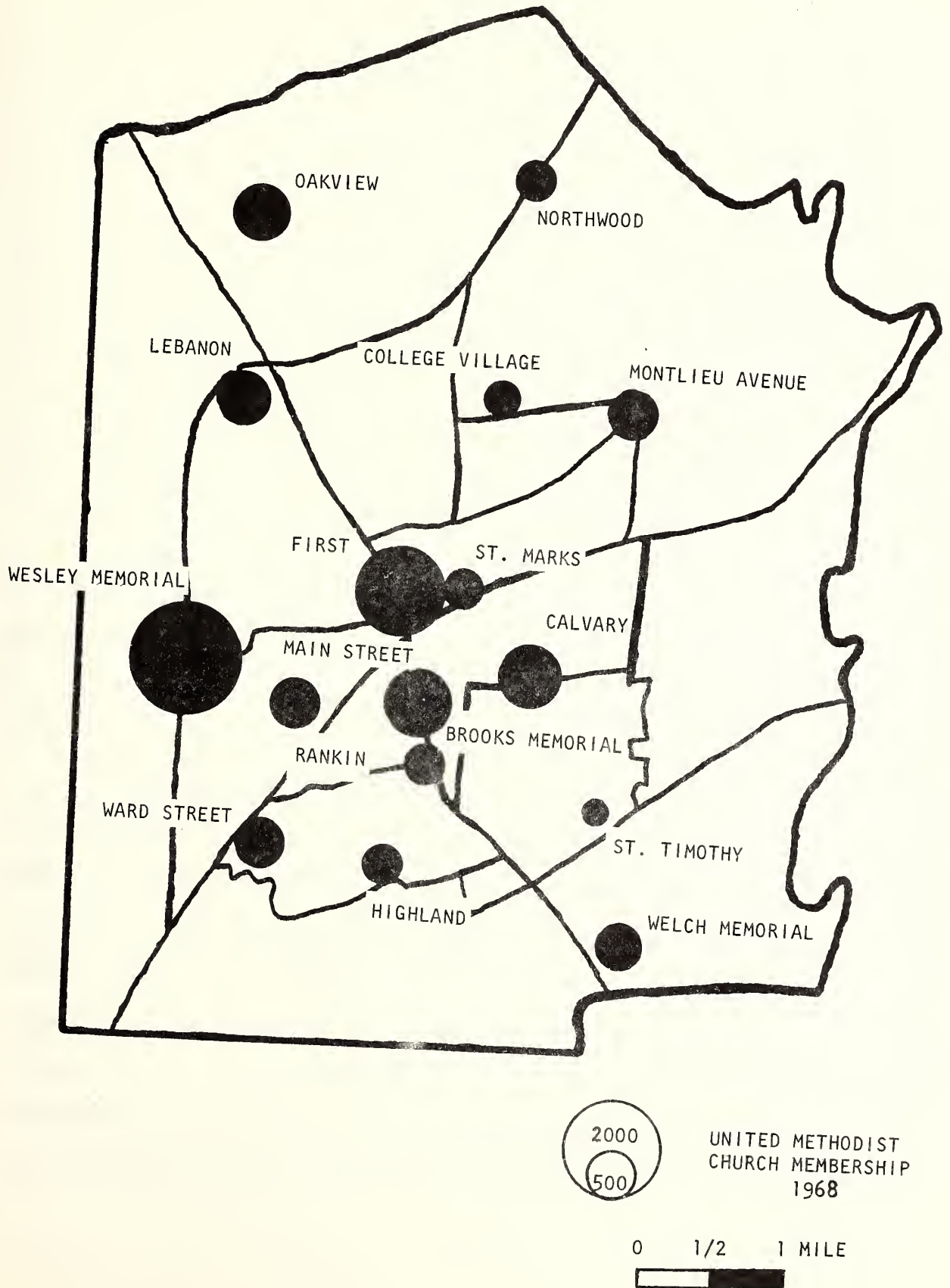


Table 1.-- POPULATION OF HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA
1900-1960

Census Year	Population	Increase Over Preceding Census	
		Number	Percent
1960	62,063	22,000	55.3
1950	39,973	1,478	3.8
1940	38,495	1,750	4.8
1930	36,745	22,443	156.9
1920	14,302	4,777	50.2
1910	9,525	5,362	128.8
1900	4,165	-	-

The figures refer to the total population living within the city limits. Although some of the population growth resulted from annexation of adjacent territory, the overall trend for the total number of inhabitants has been steadily upward.

The city of High Point contains about 25 percent of the population of Guilford County. However, the proportion of residents living in suburban communities outside the city has been steadily increasing. A special census was conducted of Guilford County in 1966 which indicated that the county had a net increase of 22,993 (9.9 percent). But all this increase occurred outside the city limits. The special census showed that the city itself actually had a decrease of 667 (-1.1 percent) persons. The county outside of the city thus had an increase of 12.8 percent in the six-year period while the city had a 1.1 percent loss. This move to the suburbs from the central city is a nationwide

phenomenon.

The City Planning Department of High Point issued a population study in June 1966 which indicated that the number of inhabitants in the city was between 70,462 and 71,525. The Planning Department thinks that the city was under-enumerated by the special census. Whatever the actual figure may be, the important fact for the church leaders to note is the increasing number and proportion of the total residents who are already living in the suburban communities outside of the city limits. This trend probably will continue in the period immediately ahead.

Population Composition

The Negro population of High Point has been steadily increasing. In 1950 there were 8,443 Negro residents; by 1960 this number had increased to 11,201 -- a gain of approximately one-third. In 1966 the special census reported the Negro population to be 12,322 -- an increase of 10 percent in six years.

The major Negro community is located just north and east of the central business district. Here is the site of the St. Mark Methodist Church. While the majority of Negro residents live north of the Southern Railroad, there are some Negro people living south of the tracks (several new churches serving Negro people have been erected in this area). There is a Negro community southwest of the downtown area. In this section the Brooks Memorial Methodist Church is located.

The Negro community has been expanding in a northeasterly direction into the area bounded on the north by Montlieu Avenue and on the South by the Southern Railroad. Immediately east of High Point College the Negro community has moved north of Montlieu Avenue. The Montlieu Methodist Church is now on the

edge of a predominately Negro community. The College Village Church is only a short distance north of a new Negro community, although the traffic patterns tend to obscure this fact. The population changes in these communities will have a significant effect on these churches in the near future.

Transportation

Currently all automobile traffic is funneled through the city. However, a projected circumferential expressway will have a major effect on the traffic pattern. The elliptical expressway will circle the city and make it easier for people to drive to locations on the other side of the city by going around rather than by going through the central business district.

Previous studies have indicated that people are willing to drive regularly as long as 15 minutes to attend church and that they will travel greater distances on freeways than on city streets because traveling is easier and quicker. The freeway could have an influence on the attendance patterns of congregations, depending on where the people live in relation to the exit ramps.

CHAPTER 2

METHODIST TRENDS

The following section of this report is concerned with particular Methodist trends within the city of High Point. It includes data on the number of church members, the geographic distribution of the Methodist constituents, the proportion of Methodist constituents in relation to the population of the various sections of the city, the church school enrollment and average attendance, and the financial trends.

Church Membership Trends

Of the sixteen United Methodist congregations within the city of High Point, seven had an increase of members during the period 1960-1968 and eight had a decrease. One church (College Village) was not organized until 1961, so that this congregation should be counted in the column of those with the membership growth. The rate of increase ranged from 5.2 percent (First Methodist) to 62.2 percent (Northwood). The rate of decrease in membership ranged from 1.9 percent (Lebanon and Wesley Memorial) to 38.6 percent (St. Timothy). These data are shown on Table 2.

In 1960 the Methodist churches then located within the city limits reported 8,610 members. Within the next eight years the total number of members increased by 113 to 8,723, representing a gain of 1.3 percent.

During the period 1960-68 a relocation occurred which resulted in two "new" congregations. The Welch Memorial Church, on the south side of High Point, relocated to a site farther to the southeast. Not all of the members found it convenient to go to the new location. Some of those who lived north of the central business district formed a nucleus for the College Village

Table 2.-- CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: TOTAL AND
PERCENTAGE CHANGE 1960-1968

High Point, North Carolina

	1960	1968	Percentage Change
Brooks Memorial	236	155	-34.3
Calvary	574	617	7.5
First	1373	1445	5.2
College Village		184*	-
Highland	208	236	11.5
Lebanon	481	472	-1.9
Main Street	900	739	-17.9
Montlieu Avenue	327	437	33.6
Northwood	135	219	62.2
Oakview	396	533	34.3
Rankin Memorial	346	395	14.2
Saint Mark	420	266	-36.7
Saint Timothy	132	81	-38.6
Ward Street	457	370	-19.0
Welch Memorial	356	348	-2.2
Wesley Memorial	2269	2226	-1.9
Total	8610	8723	1.3

*Established 1961

Church.

A decision has recently been made by the Main Street congregation to relocate to a site due north of the city limits. A property has been secured at Old Mill and Tanyard Road. The congregation is making plans to implement this decision.

Geographic Distribution of Constituency

As a part of this study, each United Methodist Church in the city of High Point submitted a map showing the size of the constituency (including members, church school enrollees and constituents) in each neighborhood. These parish distribution summaries indicate that United Methodism serves approximately 22 percent of the population of High Point. The Methodist constituency is not distributed uniformly across the city. It varies considerably by neighborhood, with the Southern Railroad acting as a general dividing line -- areas to the north of the railroad having a generally higher percentage of the population which is Methodist-related than areas to the south of the rail line.

Figure 2 shows the neighborhoods of the city of High Point. Figure 3 shows the number of Methodist constituents and the proportion of the total population which they represent. In five of the city's neighborhoods, United Methodist-related people constitute less than 10 percent of the neighborhood's population. The neighborhoods in which United Methodists made up less than 10 percent of the population were:

East Central	5.3 percent
Allen Jay	5.8 percent
South Central	7.1 percent
Southeast	8.4 percent
Southwest	8.4 percent

The seven neighborhoods having the lowest United Methodist percentage of the

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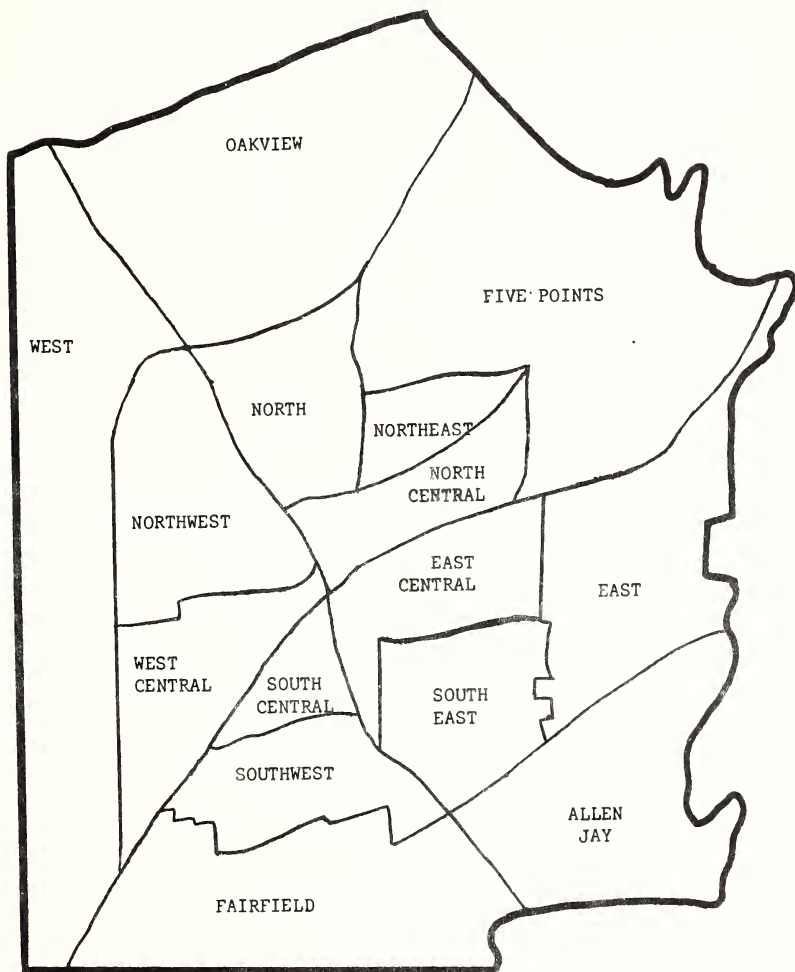
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Figure 2: NEIGHBORHOOD DELINEATION AND DESIGNATION, 1960

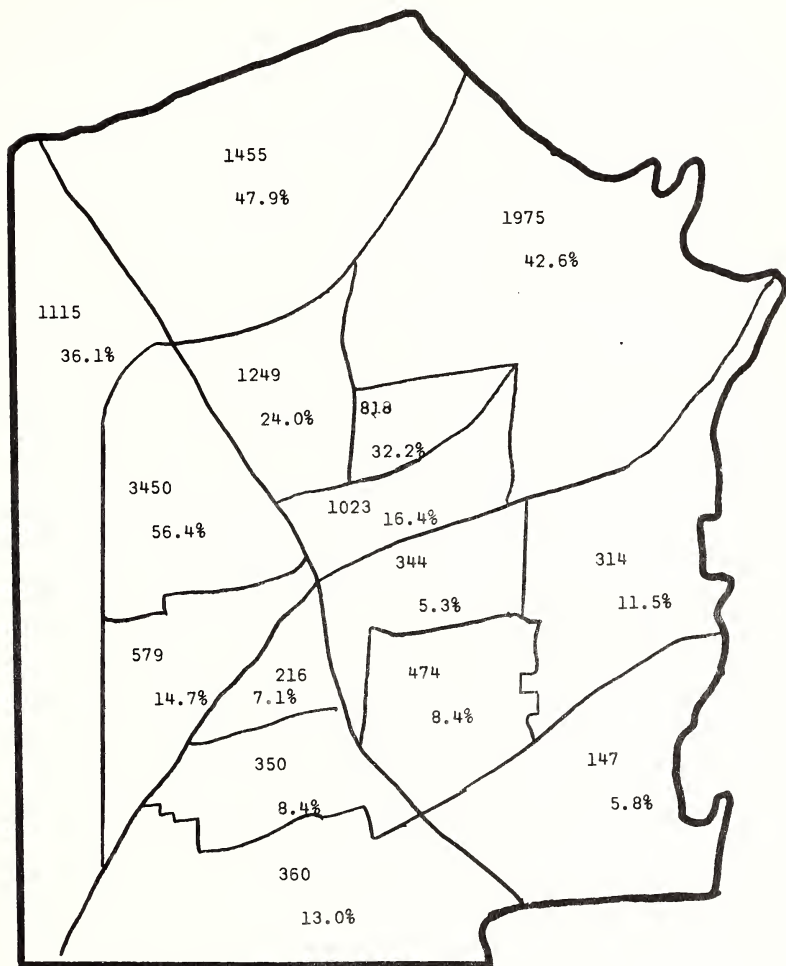
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Figure 3.-- UNITED METHODIST CONSTITUENCY: NUMBER AND PERCENT OF
TOTAL POPULATION BY NEIGHBORHOOD: 1969

High Point, North Carolina



population are all on the south side of the city.

In comparison, three neighborhoods of the city in which a high proportion of the population were affiliated with the United Methodist Church are north of the Southern Railroad. The neighborhoods with high proportions of the total population claiming to be United Methodist are:

Five Points	42.6 percent
Oakview	47.9 percent
Northwest	56.4 percent

The summary maps showing the population distribution of the parish members of each local church indicate that thirteen of the sixteen Methodist churches have members who live in sections of the city other than the one in which the church is located. Of the remaining three, two are Negro churches in predominately Negro residential communities (Brooks Memorial and St. Mark -- both of which serve their surrounding neighborhoods) and St. Timothy, which is a completely white church but draws no people from outside the immediate area.

Three churches (Calvary, Main Street and Welch Memorial) have one or more parishioners from every section of the city. Eight churches (College Village, First, Highland, Lebanon, Montlieu Avenue, Northwood, Rankin Memorial and Ward Street) draw members from three-quarters of the sections of the city, and two churches (Wesley Memorial and Oakview United Methodist) have constituents in from one-half to three-quarters of the city's sections.

Thus, it is clear that in High Point most local congregations of the United Methodist Church are drawn from a somewhat flexible geographical area -- and that two of the three exceptions to this generalization may be ex-

plained by racial separativeness.

One-fourth (24.8 percent) of all of the United Methodist constituency in High Point live in the Northwest neighborhood. Methodist constituency makes up 56.4 percent of this neighborhood's population.

The Five Point neighborhood has the next largest group of United Methodists with 14.2 percent of all High Point United Methodists. The Oakview section has the third largest concentration of High Point United Methodist-related persons with 10.5 percent. Again, these three neighborhoods are north of the Southern Railroad. The remaining 12 neighborhoods have less than 10 percent of the total of United Methodists in their neighborhood.

Table 3 shows the ranking of the Methodist constituency as percent of the total population and as percent of the total Methodist constituency in the city by each of the neighborhood units. As would be expected, the rank order of the percent of the total population and the percent of the total constituency tend to be similar.

Church School

Both the total church school enrollment and the average attendance declined during the period 1960-68. The enrollment decreased by 3.9 percent and the average attendance by 12.2 percent. Nine of the 14 churches for which there were comparable data showed a decrease ranging from 2.4 percent (Montlieu Avenue) to 28.5 percent (Calvary).

Rankin Memorial was the only Methodist church which reported a larger average attendance in 1968 than in 1960. Here the increase was only 10 persons or 4.8 percent. The decrease in the average attendance ranged from 0.9 percent (Oakview) to 64.3 percent (Brooks Memorial). These data for each of the

Table 3.-- COMPARISON OF RANK ORDERS OF METHODIST CONSTITUENCY AS PERCENT OF
NEIGHBORHOOD POPULATION AND PERCENT
OF TOTAL METHODIST CONSTITUENCY

High Point, North Carolina

Neighborhood	Rank Order by Percentage of United Methodists	
	As Percent of Total Population	As Percent of Total United Methodists
Allen Jay	14	15
East	10	13
East Central	15	11.5
Fairfield	9	10
Five Points	3	2
North	6	4
North Central	7	6
Northeast	5	7
Northwest	1	1
Oakview	2	3
South Central	13	14
Southeast	11.5	9
Southwest	11.5	11.5
West	10	13
West Central	8	8

Table 4.-- CHURCH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND AVERAGE
ATTENDANCE: TOTAL AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE
1960-1968
High Point, North Carolina

	Enrollment			Average Attendance		
	1960	1968	Percentage Change	1960	1968	Percentage Change
ks Memorial	143	105	-26.5	98	35	- 64.3
ary	604	432	-28.5	322	262	- 18.6
t	905	997	10.2	475	461	- 2.9
ge Village		174*	-		79*	-
land	175	138	-21.1	113	101	-10.6
non	443	369	-16.7	250	184	-26.4
Street	847	665	-21.5	403	297	-26.3
lieu Avenue	339	331	-2.4	193	151	-21.8
hwood	208	176	-15.4	104	87	-16.3
iew	406	446	9.9	232	230	-0.9
in Memorial	327	346	5.8	210	220	4.8
t Mark	133	161	21.1	101	65	-35.6
t Timothy	93	98	5.4	35	30	-14.3
Street	401	328	-18.2	257	200	-22.2
n Memorial	342	314	-8.2	190	165	-13.2
y Memorial	1766	1773	0.4	705	670	-4.9
	7132	6853	-3.9	3688	3237	-12.2

ublished 1961

churches are shown in Table 4.

The trend in church school statistics has been generally downward during the past several years. This can be observed in virtually all parts of the country. It presents the local churches with one of their gravest problems. This report does not suggest any solutions; this is a situation to which every congregation must give serious attention.

Financial Trends

In 1960 Methodist churches spent \$1,256,082. Eight years later the figure was \$1,361,443. This represents an increase of \$105,361 (8.4 percent). Six of the fifteen congregations that were in existence in both 1960 and 1968 actually spent less in the later year than in the earlier. These data are shown in Table 5. It is recognized that there are some hazards in comparing expenditures for only two points in time; a building expenditure may make the total for one year unusually large.

Table 6 shows the per capita expenditures for each of the two periods. In only four congregations was the per capita figure less in 1968 than eight years earlier. For the High Point Methodist churches as a whole, the per capita expenditures increased from \$145.89 in 1960 to \$154.08 in 1968.

These data indicate something of the strength of the United Methodist churches in High Point. Their total budgets for the year were in excess of one and one-third million dollars. While both the per capita and the total expenditures have risen, the rate of increase means that the church is just keeping up with inflation. Methodists are not now giving proportionately more than they were eight years ago.

Table 5.-- TOTAL EXPENDITURES 1960-1968
High Point, North Carolina

	1960	1968
Brooks Memorial	13,479	6,325
Calvary	47,065	36,856
First	109,833	158,538
College Village	-	20,941*
Highland	9,039	13,274
Lebanon	60,907	44,560
Main Street	46,162	41,573
Montlieu Avenue	18,120	28,518
Northwood	7,893	13,253
Oakview	21,372	53,908
Rankin Memorial	42,130	29,896
Saint Mark	12,440	14,099
Saint Timothy	3,021	3,609
Ward Street	23,773	29,052
Welch Memorial	10,446	32,464
Wesley Memorial	830,402	834,577
Total	1,256,082	1,361,443

*Established 1961

Table 6.-- PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES 1960-1968
High Point, North Carolina

	1960	1968
Brooks Memorial	58.26	40.81
Calvary	81.99	59.73
First	80.00	109.71
College Village*	-	113.81
Highland	43.47	56.25
Lebanon	126.63	94.41
Main Street	51.29	56.26
Montlieu Avenue	55.41	65.26
Northwood	58.47	60.52
Oakview	53.97	101.14
Rankin Memorial	121.76	75.69
Saint Mark	29.62	52.81
Saint Timothy	22.89	44.56
Ward Street	52.03	78.52
Welch Memorial	29.34	93.29
Wesley Memorial	365.98	374.92
Total	145.89	156.08

*Established 1961

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC DECISIONS

This section of the report focuses on strategic decisions which must be made by certain congregations and the denomination in the near future. Selected data are presented on certain churches.

For several churches there are graphs which show the rate of growth of the church membership, the church school enrollment and church school average attendance. These semi-logarithmic graphs show the comparison between rates of growth of different populations. In studying these graphs it should be remembered that the slope of the line is the significant aspect. If the lines showing the church membership and the church school enrollment are parallel, it means that both these groups are growing or declining at the same rate. If the line representing one group rises more sharply than the line representing the other, it means that the former is increasing at a more rapid rate.

Racially Changing Communities

One of the most difficult problems facing urban churches, both in the North and in the South, is presented by communities which are changing from white to Negro. Large migrations of black people to cities have occurred during the past two decades. Negro communities have expanded into what had previously been largely white neighborhoods.

The church located in such a community may suddenly find that its members are moving away. Families with school-age children tend to move first so that the church school is one of the first parts of the program to show a decline. While some members may commute back to the church for a time, it becomes increasingly difficult to recruit white members. The church has three

alternatives: it can close and its members transfer to churches in their new neighborhoods; it can relocate to a reasonably convenient site or merge with an outlying church; or it can continue to serve the residents of the community. In the latter case, the congregation gradually changes from white to black.

As we have seen, the Negro community of High Point is expanding to the north-east. At first Negro people moved into the community south of Montlieu Avenue -- now some are moving north of that thoroughfare. The Negro population has moved as far east as the Montlieu Methodist Church which has been one of the strong neighborhood congregations in High Point. The membership increased between 1960 and 1968. The figure in 1968 was 437. The total expenditures for that year were \$28,518. The church is well located near the junction of two major streets. The building is attractive and well maintained.

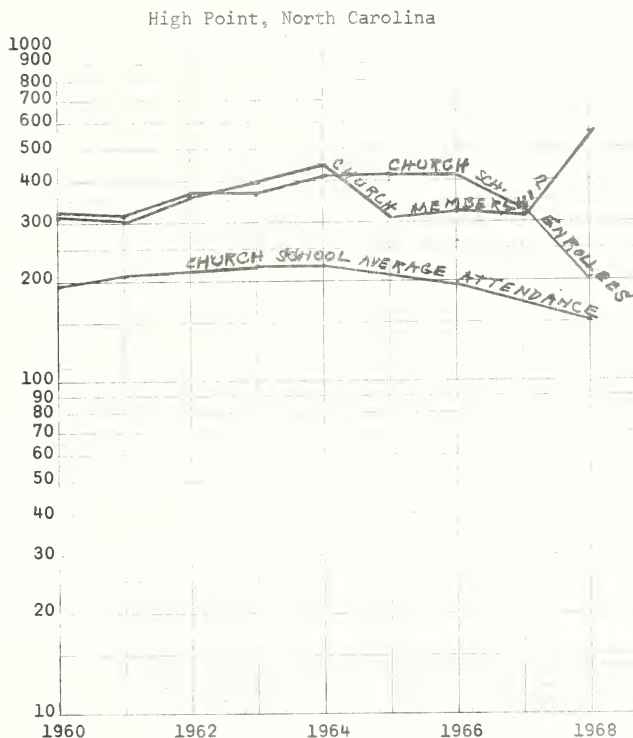
The graph at the top of page 20 indicates that the church membership has remained relatively stable during the past eight years (with the exception of a sudden upturn during 1967-68). The church school figures have been decreasing for the past four consecutive years.

The Montlieu Avenue congregation will have difficulty maintaining itself as a white congregation in its present location. In this area (the location of the suburban congregations, it is difficult to see where the church might relocate although it could merge with an already existing outlying church.

This congregation must make a decision concerning its long-term use of its facilities to minister to the present residents of the community. Such a decision is one which the congregation should not make alone but in consultation with the denomination.

It is clear that the community surrounding the Montlieu Avenue Church will have a Negro population for the foreseeable future. The basic question

Figure 4.-- MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL:
MONTLIEU AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1960-1968



to be considered is how the United Methodist Church can best minister to the new residents of this section of High Point.

College Village is another church which may be affected by racial change. This church was started about ten years ago when Welch Memorial Church was re-located from south of High Point's business district to the Allen Jay neigh-

borhood. Some members of Welch Memorial became the nucleus for College Village.

The church is located just north of Methodist-related High Point College. The college separates the church from the racially changing community to the south. Whether or not the college will act as a barrier to the northward movement of the Negro population is not yet clear. Negroes now live immediately east of the campus.

The present church facilities are limited. The church does not have a sanctuary. The building debt requires more than one-third of all monies expended annually. The growth rate of the College Village Church is shown on the graph on the following page. The church school attendance has been decreasing for the last three years.

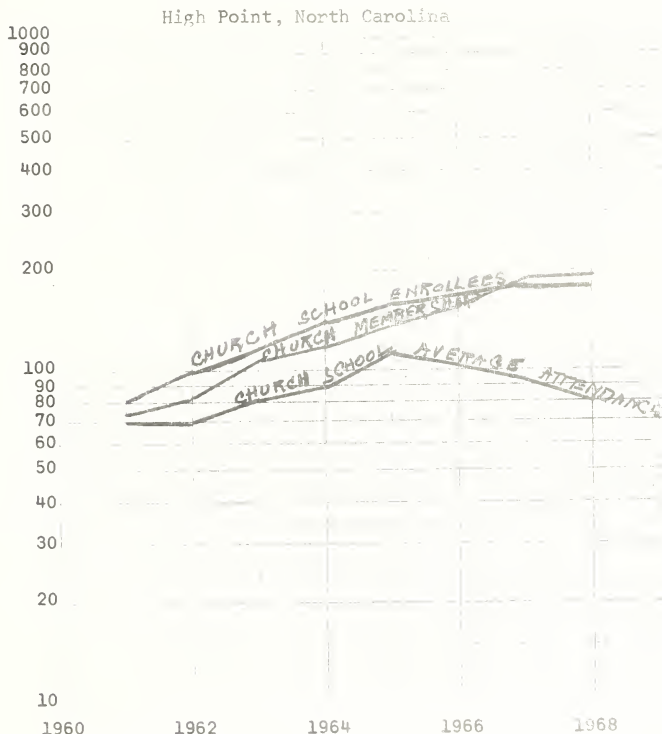
In general, the College Village constituency live in the same areas as those from four other United Methodist Churches: Northwood, Montlieu Avenue, Oakview, and Lebanon.

The College Village Church will be affected by the extent and direction of racial change in High Point. If the racial change continues north toward College Village, the future of the church as a white congregation is questionable. If, on the other hand, the neighborhood remains white, College Village can be a neighborhood church. At this point it is difficult to predict the course of events.

Ministry to Negro People

The recent merger of the North Carolina-Virginia Annual Conference with the three conferences of the Southeastern Jurisdiction has placed the responsibility for Methodism's ministry to the Negro people of the city on the High Point District of the Western North Carolina Conference. There are two

Figure 5.-- MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT: COLLEGE VILLAGE UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH 1960-1968

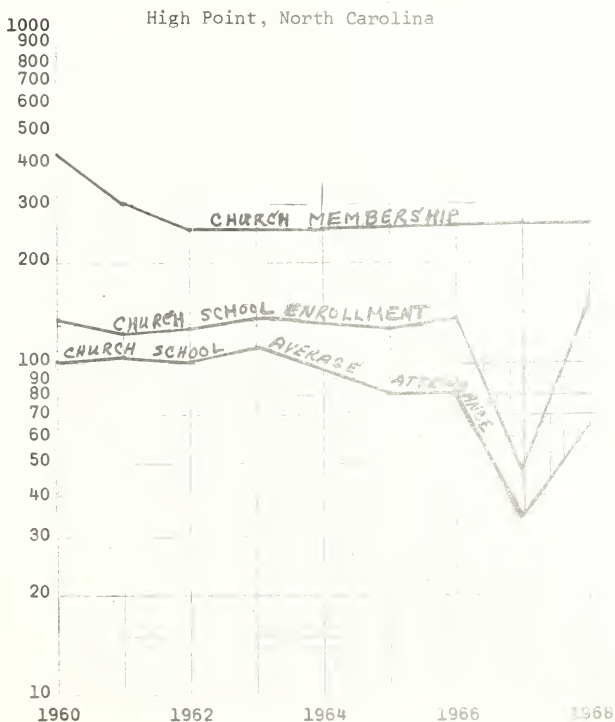


churches in the city which were formerly in the North Carolina-Virginia Conference -- St. Mark and Brooks Memorial.

St. Mark Church, the older of the two, is located on Washington Street in a section which has traditionally been a Negro business district. The

present membership of St. Mark Church is 266 -- a decrease of 36.7 percent from the 1960 figure. Figure 6 below shows that the membership decreased sharply between 1960 and 1962, but has remained fairly stable since then. Church school enrollment remained fairly constant for the 1960-1968 period until 1966. It dropped sharply in 1967 and rose again in 1968. Church school average attendance declined steadily between 1963 and 1967, but increased during 1968. For the conference year 1968 St. Mark United Methodist Church had a total expenditure of \$14,099 and a per capita expenditure of

Figure 6.-- MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT: ST. MARK UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH 1960-1968



\$52.81.

The present church building is old and in need of considerable repair. A major capital outlay would be necessary to put the building in shape to meet present needs of the congregation and community. A study of the plant needs to be undertaken to help to determine whether or not it is structurally sound and if renovation should be recommended. The congregation might well consider possible relocation farther east to the area to which Negro people are now moving. This would be in the section where the Montlieu Church is now located.

One of the difficulties to be overcome is what seems to be the strong difference of opinion among the people in the congregation of St. Mark Church concerning the role of the church. Some members feel that the emphasis should be on social services to the people in the immediate community. Others prefer to have a more or less typical congregation with a liturgical worship, typical Sunday School program and the like.

The Brooks Memorial Church was sponsored by St. Mark Church. It is located in a predominately Negro community southeast of the central business district.

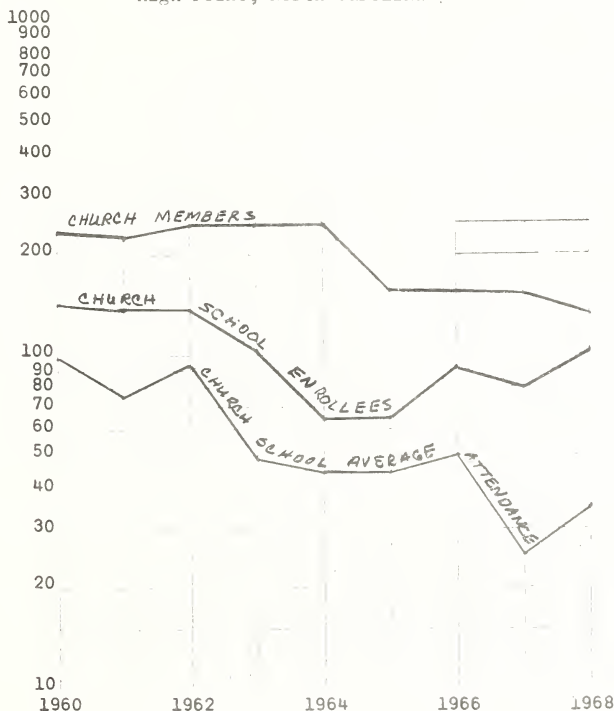
From 1960 to 1968 the membership of Brooks Memorial has decreased just over 34 percent. During the same time the church school enrollment decreased by 27 percent, while the church school average attendance decreased by 65 percent (Figure 7).

Presently 55 percent of all persons related to Brooks Memorial live in the North Central neighborhood, which is north of the tracks and west of Main Street. About 40 percent of the related persons live in the neighborhood in which the church is located. The Negro population movement is northeast from

the church's neighborhood to the North Central, Northeast and Five Points neighborhoods. The church recently purchased a parsonage for their first full-time pastor in the North Central neighborhood about one and a half miles northeast of the church.

Figure 7.-- MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT: BROOKS MEMORIAL
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 1960-1968

High Point, North Carolina



The program of Brooks has two foci. The first focus is around the members and church school enrollees. Many of these are middle-class who commute back to the church for programs. The second focus is a day care center ministering basically to the people who live in the area -- primarily poor black people who are, in many instances, newcomers.

The building at Brooks appears externally to be in good condition but there is much maintenance work needed. The interior of the building needs: additional toilets, renovation, heating and air-conditioning, as well as easily accessible and functional church offices. In addition, new property must be purchased if the church is to remain and expand.

There appears to be a need for a United Methodist witness in this general locale. Brooks Memorial could serve effectively as a neighborhood congregation for the foreseeable future.

A matter of grave concern is the decrease of Negro people who are members of the United Methodist churches at a time when the number of Negroes in the total population is rising. Between 1960 and 1966, the number of Negro residents increased by 1,121 or 10.0 percent. During the eight-year period 1960-1968 the total membership of St. Mark and Brooks Memorial decreased by 235, or a loss of 36 percent.

Churches in Mill Communities

The southwest section of High Point is an area where a number of mills are located. Usually a mill and a residential community were erected at the same time. The community provided housing for the workers who could easily walk to work. Some mill communities are like separate entities, having a

life and character all their own. Churches located in these neighborhoods draw practically all their members from the immediate vicinity.

Of the two United Methodist Churches in this section of the city, Highland Park has been most closely associated with the adjacent mill -- the company erected and is still the owner of the church and its parsonage. Until quite recently the church secured its heat from the mill. This church building still has adequate space for its needs but both exterior and interior maintenance work is needed.

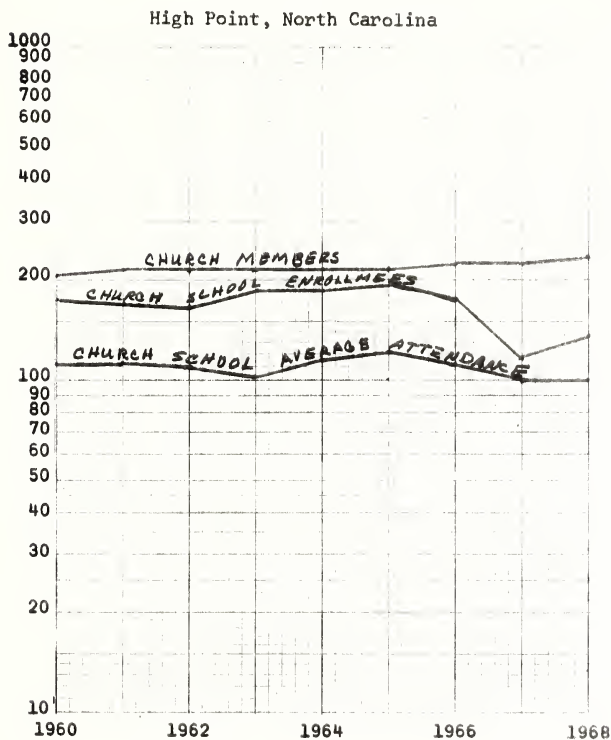
Sixty percent of the people related to the Highland Park Church live in its neighborhood. Only 12 percent live in the Fairfield neighborhood which lies immediately to the south. The remaining 28 percent are scattered throughout High Point and its environs. This church is experiencing the typical suburbanization pattern of the population: the older-aged families continue to reside in the neighborhood around the church, but when the younger people marry they move out to the suburban areas. Although many younger families still commute back to the Highland Park Church, churches generally lose most commuting families when the oldest child reaches junior high school age.

The leadership in Highland Park Church is falling with increasing frequency to the commuting members -- another familiar characteristic of neighborhood churches which face major decisions regarding their future ministry.

Figure 8 on page 28 shows the rate of change for the church membership and church school. The church membership and average attendance have remained rather stable during the past eight-year period. The church school enrollment dropped sharply beginning in 1965 but this trend was reversed in 1968.

The general aging of the congregation is seen in another dimension. Forty-two percent of the membership is over age 55. One-third of this group

Figure 8.-- MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT:
HIGHLAND PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1960-1968



is over age 65. Usually the retirement age indicates limited income for many. In the next ten years, with more than one-quarter of the membership reaching this age, the financial undergirdment will suffer. It would be difficult for this congregation to have to carry the cost of maintaining this church property.

It is quite possible that Highland Park and St. Timothy could be served by the same pastor. The churches are in different sections of the city but are close enough for a minister to travel between them conveniently. Neither church has a membership sufficiently large to warrant the employment of a full-time pastor but together they would likely make an adequate workload for a minister.

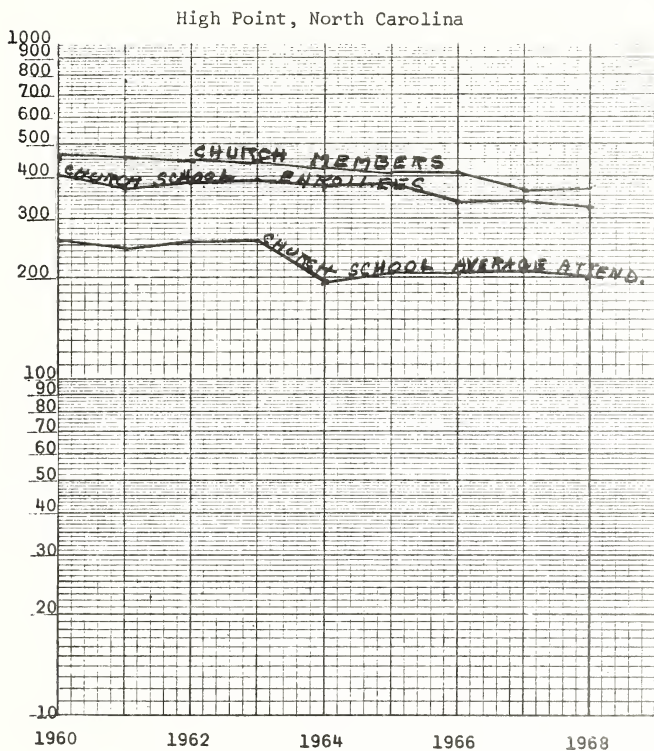
Approximately a mile west of Highland Park is the Ward Street Church. Although these churches are fairly close together, they are in different communities separated by industrial plants.

The Ward Street Church has 360 members. It has been a fairly strong congregation which has been declining slowly but steadily in recent years. The 1968 membership of 370 was 19.0 percent less than that reported in 1960. Both the church school enrollment and average attendance have decreased slowly although the average attendance has remained stable since 1964. These data are shown on Figure 9.

Ward Street reported a total constituency of 622 persons. While the congregation has some members in all parts of the city, the majority of persons with whom the church has contact live in the southwest section of High Point where the church is located. This congregation had a total expenditure of \$29,052 for the year ending June 30, 1968. The per capita expenditure was \$78.52.

Most neighborhoods do not remain stable. Today young families move to suburban areas where they can purchase new homes with long-term loans. The new residents who move into the older neighborhoods may not feel at home in the established churches. However, the church must minister to the residents that live in its immediate community. While some persons will drive some distance to attend a church that they prefer, every congregation has a re-

Figure 9.-- MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT:
WARD STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1960-1968



sponsibility to the people who live within the shadow of its steeple.

Although these churches are quite different from each other, they are located so close together that there might be ways in which they could co-

operate to provide better services for their people. This might include merging their youth groups or sharing audiovisual or other equipment.

The Small Neighborhood Church

The St. Timothy United Methodist Church, having a total membership of 81 people and an expenditure of \$3,607 for the 1968 conference year, is the smallest congregation in High Point. Its physical plant consists of a sanctuary and one large multi-purpose room.

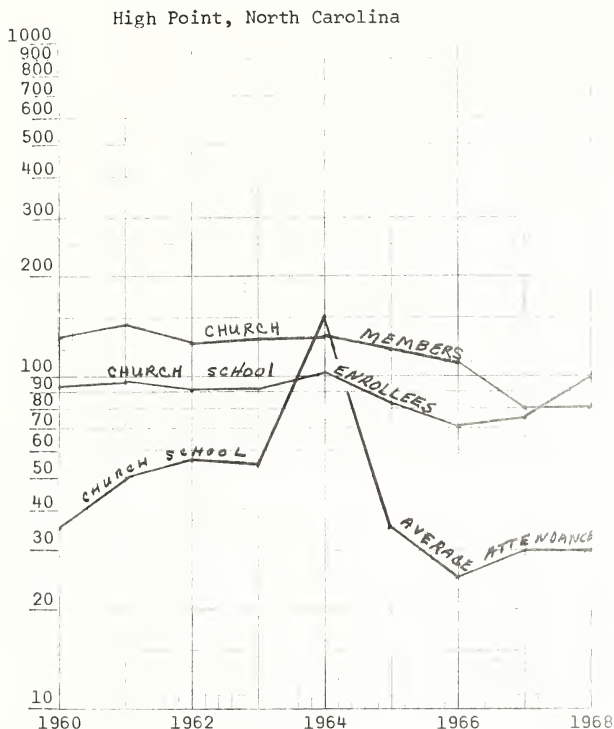
This church was organized when one surrounding residential community -- bounded by Green Street, Brentwood Street, Interstate 85 and Main Street -- was created in the period of housing expansion which immediately followed World War II. The congregation has continued to be drawn exclusively from this surrounding neighborhood which is relatively stable at present with no observed phenomenon threatening this stability.

Church membership and that of the church school decreased slightly until about a year ago, as illustrated in Figure 10. Last year's figures indicate a slight upward trend but any dramatic increase in these membership figures is not likely because of the present stability of the surrounding community.

St. Timothy Church is small and has both the advantages and disadvantages of similar congregations elsewhere. It can provide the kind of intimate group fellowship that many large churches in the United States today are struggling to create. But it places a burden of responsibility on every individual member to contribute large amounts of his time, talent and resources for its continued existence.

Its programs will be limited by available funds. A full-time pastor can neither be supported financially nor be given enough work to do; music programs,

Figure 10.-- MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT:
ST. TIMOTHY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1960-1968



youth activities, etc., will all be limited in their scope and challenge.

But if the congregation wishes to continue to exist, it could share a pastor with another church nearby, or secure the services of a part-time lay preacher or a student pastor.

The relatively numerous Methodist congregations in High Point eliminate justification for denominational mission subsidy support of the St. Timothy Church. The congregation must itself decide if it can continue to attract

sufficient members to maintain a viable church with a minimum level of church program. The denomination must decide whether or not to continue to provide pastoral leadership for this small but reasonably healthy church.

Priorities

Within Protestantism the local church is the basic unit of operation. It is here that the Christian witness is proclaimed and here it is accepted or rejected. The Christian Church succeeds or fails because of the performance of the local congregation. The denomination can only offer advice and perhaps mission subsidy.

On the basis of the data gathered on the United Methodist churches in High Point, the following priorities demand the attention of the congregational and district leaders.

1. Ministry to the Negro people of High Point. The Negro population is increasing while the number of Negro Methodists has been decreasing. A strategy should be developed to better minister to Negro people.

2. A strategy for racially changing communities. At the moment, this specifically refers to the Montlieu Avenue Methodist Church. The congregation and the denomination need to determine what role this church should try to fulfill in the period immediately ahead.

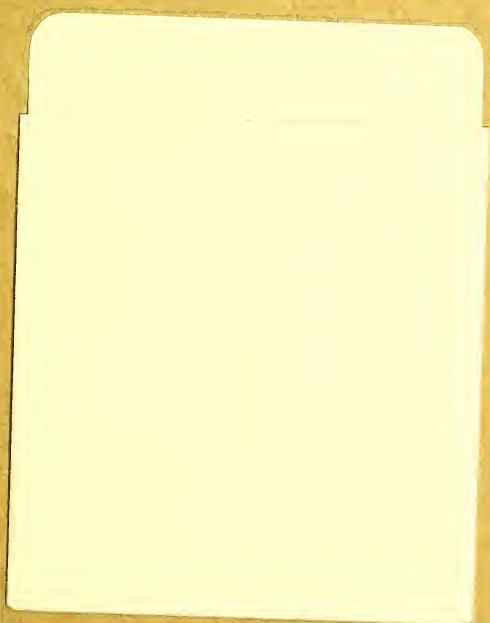
3. The development of program in the mill communities. This refers particularly to southwest High Point where Ward Street and Highland Park Churches are located. This section will continue to have a large residential population for the foreseeable future and Methodism has a continuing responsibility to this area.

4. A decision regarding the future of St. Timothy Church. There has been some consideration of discontinuing the St. Timothy Church. A decision should be made forthwith so that the congregation can have the security of knowing what lies immediately ahead.

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